

him for his service to Vermont, and we thank him for his friendship and loyal service to our State. We will miss our daily interactions with him, but we are grateful that he forever will be part of the Leahy family.

TRIBUTE TO CORNELIA DOZIER COOPER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Kentucky is home to many talented artists. They capture our heritage with color, movement, and language. Their creativity offers inspiration and makes us proud to call the Bluegrass home. Today, I would like to recognize my friend Cornelia Dozier Cooper, one of these gifted Kentuckians, who continues to awe our Commonwealth with her vision, generosity, and leadership. Cornelia was recently recognized by her hometown with a Distinguished Community Service Award. It is a privilege to join her many fans in sharing my hearty congratulations.

Cornelia moved to Pulaski County in Southeastern Kentucky six decades ago. Instantly, in her words, she “fell in love.” The breathtaking landscapes fill her imagination and fuel her art. Cornelia skillfully captures the region’s beauty and the distinct character of its people in her watercolor. She brings joy and appreciation to all those who have viewed her work. I am proud to count myself among them. In 2019, Cornelia received the Milner Award, our Commonwealth’s highest artistic honor, in tribute to her mastery of the brush and her devotion to her craft.

Kentucky’s traditions are reflected in Cornelia’s artwork as well as in her philanthropy and service. She has helped found and continues to support numerous local organizations to foster artistic expression. After receiving a donation of books from the Carnegie Library, Cornelia knocked on doors around Somerset to gather support for the area’s first library. Her own endowment provides grants to aspiring performers and artists in the Lake Cumberland area. As an enthusiastic mentor and a compassionate friend, Cornelia has singlehandedly led a new generation of budding artists to find their own inspiration in the hills of Southeastern Kentucky.

Even beyond the brush, Cornelia has brought beauty to her community. In Somerset’s Fountain Square—which hosts a statue of Cornelia’s brother-in-law, Kentucky Senator John Sherman Cooper—she has taken personal responsibility for planting flowers and leading renovations. She is driven to make the square a source of collective pride. Cornelia’s influence on the local creative community is difficult to overstate, and it will continue for years to come.

My friend continues to create well into her nineties. She has lifted this entire community with grace and art. It is a privilege to once again thank Cornelia for sharing her talents across

Kentucky. She has earned this award and our sincere praise. I encourage all my Senate colleagues to join me in congratulating Cornelia Cooper on a lifetime of distinction and success.

CONFIRMATION OF XAVIER BECERRA

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, on March 18, I voted against the confirmation of Xavier Becerra to be Secretary of Health and Human Services. Mr. Becerra has no substantive experience in public health policy, and he has proven himself to be an extremist on the few occasions he has engaged on health care issues. In October 2017, he told FOX News, “I’ve been a supporter of Medicare for All for the 24 years that I was in Congress.” As attorney general of California, he filed over 100 lawsuits against the Trump administration, including leading a group of attorneys general in opposing Texas’s legal challenge to Obamacare in *Texas v. Azar*. He also won lawsuits to reclassify gig economy companies like Uber and Lyft as employers. In response, California’s Prop 22 was drafted, with a description saying it “changes employment classification rules for app-based transportation and delivery workers.” Becerra’s office, which has authority to summarize ballot measures, seemingly tried to sabotage Prop 22 by changing its summary to say it “exempts app-based transportation and delivery companies from providing employee benefits to certain drivers and delivery workers.” Californians passed Prop 22 anyway, with over 58 percent support.

Mr. Becerra’s history suggests he will use this Cabinet post for political activism, not for advancing our Nation’s public health. For that reason, I opposed his confirmation.

REMEMBERING JUSTICE LORENE B. FERGUSON

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, it is an honor to recognize the lifetime of service and historic contributions of Navajo Nation Supreme Court Justice Lorene B. Ferguson, who died on March 1, 2021, with her daughters at her bedside, from complications of COVID-19.

Justice Ferguson was the first woman justice on the Navajo Nation Supreme Court. In 2001, she was nominated to serve as Associate Justice by President Kelsey Begaye and was confirmed by the Navajo Nation Council. She served as an Associate Justice on the Navajo Nation Supreme Court until 2007, including as Acting Chief Justice from 2004 to 2005.

Prior to her appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice Ferguson served as a Navajo circuit judge in the Kayenta District Court and as a Navajo Tribal Court judge in the Shiprock, To’haiilee, Ramah, and Alamo Courts. She also served for 8 years as a staff attorney at the Navajo Nation Department of Justice, where she drafted the first Navajo Election Code and Navajo

scholarship policy for the Department of Education.

Justice Ferguson was born in the Sawmill, Ní’ii Jí’ih, Chapter of the Navajo Nation in the Fort Defiance Agency in Arizona. She graduated from Fort Lewis College in 1965. She worked in community development, welfare rights, and Native American education as a Head Start teacher and Indian education training technician. She began her legal career after graduating from the University of New Mexico School of Law in 1983.

Justice Ferguson served as a mentor and role model for numerous Navajo attorneys and law clerks. She was a strong advocate for education and Tribal traditional law. She served as a judicial education faculty member for the National Judicial College at the University of Nevada in Reno and was the first Tribal judge to serve as a judge in residence at the University of Tulsa School of Law. She frequently spoke at law schools around the country to educate students and faculty on the importance of Tribal law.

Justice Ferguson was also a loving wife, mother, grandmother, and matriarch for her family. My thoughts are with all of her loved ones and all those who were touched by her life during this time of loss.

TRIBUTE TO DR. DAN ALPERT

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, it is an honor to recognize over two decades of dedication and service to New Mexico from Dr. Dan Alpert, my senior legislative assistant, who is retiring after a distinguished career in the U.S. Senate.

A dedicated public servant, Dr. Alpert began his career as a nuclear engineer at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, NM, working on nuclear power, renewable energy, and energy efficiency programs for 20 years.

In 1997, Dr. Alpert took his extensive experience at Sandia to Capitol Hill for a 1-year fellowship sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, AAAS, in the office of my predecessor, Senator Jeff Bingaman. Since then, Dr. Alpert has served the people of New Mexico in the U.S. Senate for more than two decades.

Dr. Alpert’s dedication to New Mexico and expertise has been instrumental in steering my legislative priorities on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Dr. Alpert’s distinguished career includes leadership in energy storage research and development, cutting-edge energy transmission planning, and careful oversight and stewardship of our Nation’s nuclear laboratories and the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant. While he probably did not plan on it when he was earning his nuclear engineering Ph.D., Dr. Alpert also served as a longtime and well-respected agriculture and infrastructure expert in Senator Bingaman’s office.

Anyone who has ever worked with Dr. Alpert also knows that his policy